

**Town of Arlington
Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Tuesday, February 12, 2002 7:15 PM

Committee members present: Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Ralph Elwell, Larry Englisher, Alan McClenen, Lt. Jim McHugh, Michael Rademacher, Scott Smith, Ed Starr

Minutes from 1/8/2002

The minutes of this meeting were approved unanimously.

Reports received

We received the Transportation Assessment Report and the Massachusetts Avenue Corridor Report, noting that the Mass. Corridor report appears to be identical to the unbound copy reviewed last month.

Working Groups for Magnolia Street and Cleveland Street

Larry Englisher expressed concern about the piecemeal, one-street-at-a-time approach to these neighborhoods and possible traffic calming actions. He suggested a moratorium on traffic calming actions until the transportation assessment. However, others felt that such a moratorium would not be politically feasible.

The following working groups were appointed:

Cleveland Street: Scott Smith (chair), Mike Rademacher, Jim McHugh, Ron Santosuoso
Magnolia Street: Elisabeth Carr-Jones (chair), Scott Smith, Jim McHugh, Ron
Santosuoso

We agreed to aim for an early morning meeting (evening meetings are difficult for the Town employees, and mid-day meetings are difficult for citizens and TAC members who work out of town), possibly in Fox Library. The goal is to have recommendations for a special TAC meeting in late March, in preparation for the 4/8 Board of Selectmen's meeting.

Campaign for the Warrant Article

Alan McClenen arrived during this discussion, which centered on activities for the consultants, the process for the Massachusetts Avenue Corridor Study, and the Louis Berger Assessment Study.

Ed presented the top five possible consultant activities. We agreed this was a reasonable list:

1. Initiate a redesign of the Mass Ave/Pleasant/Mystic series of intersections
2. Proceed to the next stage of the Mass Ave Corridor design with a focus on improving pedestrian safety.

3. Recommend and design experimental application of traffic calming devices at selected locations in Arlington.
4. Integrate our traffic, accident, and street infrastructure data that are now spread between various locations. Supplement data where needed. Provide so that it is in a useful and available form to TAC, Community Safety, Planning, Public Works, the Board of Selectmen, and possible citizens through a web site.
5. Support for TAC activities. Attend meetings. Advice on traffic calming issues sent by BOS. Develop crosswalk guidelines and recommended procedures for dealing with traffic calming requests. Provide three technical update sessions. Possible subjects include dealing with the state, new technologies, regional issues.

Ralph Elwell discussed the process the changes in Arlington Heights. It involved a number of community meetings. For the Corridor Study, critical stakeholders include each town meeting member in the area and businesses in the area (both owners and operators)

Although the corridor study is a DPW project funded with Chapter 90 money, the Planning Office is probably best suited to facilitate the public process. We have reserved the evenings of Tuesday 3/5 and Tuesday 3/26 for public meetings. David Walkinshaw should be involved, to represent the businesses. We need to consider the needs of the disabled. Given the number of bus routes on Mass. Ave., the question was raised as to when the MBTA should become involved in the effort.

A subcommittee (Ralph Elwell, Alan McClenen, Scott Smith, with invitations to David Walkinshaw and DPW) agreed to meet on Tuesday 2/19 at 4 PM, to further discuss plans for the study and the public meetings.

We briefly discussed Transportation Assessment study from Louis Berger. TAC members expressed the view that it would be an extremely helpful document once some inaccuracies are corrected. We will review it and send comments to Alan by 2/19.

Reports on Meetings

Larry Englisher reported on the Alewife meeting. Groups in attendance included

1. Belmont Citizens Forum (Jim Graves)
2. Association of Cambridge Neighborhoods (Stash Horowitz)
3. East Arlington Good Neighbors (George Laite)
4. Alewife Study Group (North Cambridge) (Steve Schnapp)
5. Alewife Neighbors (Denise Guerin)
6. Belmont Land Trust (Neal Winston)
7. Friends of Alewife Reservation (Ellen Moss)
8. Cambridge Highlands Neighborhood Association (Ann Tennis)
9. Mystic River Watershed Association (Grace Perez)
10. Mass. Audubon Society (Mike Hanson)
11. Coalition for Alewife (Carolyn Mintz)

The major concern was park environment / wetlands, and not traffic.

Ed Starr reported on the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting, which was held in Bedford last week. This meeting is part of a series of discussions being held to allow public input to the Draft Update of the Regional Transportation Plan 2000-25. Alan McClenen noted that the plan lists Alewife/16 as a project, but improvements to Route 16 between Alewife and I93 are not on the list. This plan is updated periodically (every 3 - 5 years). Maintenance projects, such as the Summer St. reconstruction, are not included. It may be too late to make input for the current cycle, but we should think about input to the next cycle in a year or so. Alan McClenen notes that the north-south corridors (such as Route 60) are a big issue for Arlington.

Alan McClenen departed after this discussion.

Other Projects

We received some estimates of design costs for traffic calming measures from LBG via DPW. They indicated design costs ranging from \$9,000 (one raised crosswalk) to \$18,000 (five raised crosswalks). Scott Smith suggested that DPW speak with a community experienced in raised crossings (such as Cambridge) to see if these costs are reasonable.

Jim McHugh reported on the measurement program: They are currently working on the Brooks Ave./ Herbert Road area. Elisabeth mentioned that Don Eunson (of Safe Walks to School) would be requesting measurements of Dow, Park, and Florence. Scott Smith mentioned that to support the corridor study, it would be necessary to take measurements of some of the side streets crossing Mass. Ave., such as Bates and Orvis.

DPW delivered an illustration showing a typical design for shared use path/road crossings. This is from Chapter 9 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (<http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>).

Ed Starr reported on the partial results from the Vision 2020 survey. So far, 700 surveys have been tabulated. Pedestrian safety tops the list of transportation issues.

Larry Englisher noted that the effort to obtain a coop student seems to be on hold. Ed Starr agreed to follow up.

Procedures / Management

Jim McHugh noted that when an issue is referred to the TAC, the police will no longer be submitting a separate report to the Selectmen, although they reserve the right to do so in the future.

We briefly discussed ideas for volunteer working groups. People to draw from include 1) the applicants for TAC who were not appointed, 2) citizens who have attended our

meetings and offered their expertise, and 3) East Arlington residents – for the Mass. Ave. Corridor study. Ed Starr asked that ideas be sent to him. Scott Smith noted that the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee is already working on Bicycle Paths/Safety.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM

Handouts:

Agenda packet including agenda, possible activities for consultants in 2002, steps for the warrant article, summarized responses from the first 700 Vision 2020 surveys, process for Board of Selectmen requests, and some possible volunteer working groups – from Ed Starr

Minutes from 1/8/02 – from Scott Smith

Packet of letters from citizens on Cleveland Street – from Ed Starr

Shawn Nevalainen's letter to the Selectmen on Magnolia Street – from Scott Smith

Scope of work for raised crosswalk(s) on Jason Street – from DPW, via Ed Starr

Illustration of shared use path roadway crossings (Figure 9B-3 of MUTCD) – from DPW, via Ed Starr

“Moving Ahead” report from Federal Highway Administration

Draft outline of talking points for a Mass Ave. Corridor Public meeting – from Scott Smith